



United States Department of the Interior

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

Miss Darlene Keju

Ebeye, Marshall Islands

AUG 6 1979

Dear Miss Keju:

The Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Regional Office, San Francisco, forwarded your letter of July 12, 1979, to this Office since, as you know, the Department of the Interior has administrative responsibility for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Since many of the points you raise deal with matters that have been handled by the Department of Energy or its predecessor agencies, I have sent a copy of your letter to that Department for comment.

I do wish to assure you that this Department is very cognizant of its responsibilities with respect to the residents of the Marshalls whose lives in some way or other were affected by the atomic testing program. The Department of Energy is equally concerned.

In May of this year at an Interagency meeting here in Washington which was convened at the request of the Marshall Islands Political Status Delegation, a far-reaching discussion on radiological problems in the Marshalls took place. One result of that meeting was the agreement that a medical survey of the people of certain of the Northern Marshalls would be carried out. Currently, in collaboration with the Department of Energy, we are dealing with President Kabua on arrangements for such a survey. It is my understanding that this survey will be done by an independent group of specialists.

We all realize the depth of feeling of the people of the Marshalls whose lives have been affected by the testing program. As you know, Under Secretary James A. Joseph, Deputy Under Secretary Wallace O. Green, and our Director, Mrs. Ruth Van Cleve, visited the Marshalls last summer and traveled to Kili Island and Bikini Island to meet with the people there. Time did not permit them to visit Rongelap and Utirik but they had an opportunity to meet and talk with representatives from these islands at Majuro and at Ebeye.

cc: Dr. Bruce Wachholz

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The Under Secretary, while he was in the Marshalls and here in Washington, repeatedly has stated that priority attention will be given by this Department to the problems of the people of the Marshalls who were displaced by the needs of the testing program or who were affected by the unfortunate accidental fallout of 1954.

Your concern for the welfare of these people is to be commended. It is one, I assure you, that we share.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) George R. Milner

George R. Milner
Acting Director
Office of Territorial Affairs